



## FROM ARLENE TO GAMMA

Once the 2005 Hurricane Season began, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita gave Bahamians a chance to come to the aid of the United States. The Bahamas certainly seized the opportunity, with an extraordinary outpouring of monetary and moral support that included a national prayer service and a telethon for Katrina victims. Total Bahamian monetary assistance provided through the Embassy nearly \$250,000.

The government of the Bahamas pledged \$50,000 to the Katrina relief effort, while many individuals, including local Embassy employees, retirees and others, gave small donations to the American Red Cross ranging from \$20 to \$200. This does not include the countless calls to the Embassy from many Bahamians who were referred directly to the Red Cross website to make contributions over the internet.

Even school children across the Bahamas jumped into action, with students in Nassau organizing bake sales that raised over \$2,000 and a school in Freeport raising over \$1,000 by collecting lunch-money change. Another school in Abaco raised over \$500 for Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

The local church community also stepped forward to help. In addition to numerous prayer meetings, two small churches

together raised over \$1,500. Additionally, the national telethon, held on September 30, featured some of the Bahamas' most accomplished and recognized entertainers.

Hopefully, the next hurricane season will be a quiet one, but if it isn't there is no doubt that we will be ready to work together wherever help is needed.

## NO AMENDMENT POLICY NOW IN EFFECT

**The US Department of State is now issuing electronic passports in which your personal data is included on a data chip. Because of these changes, US citizens can no longer have their US passports amended. Below are some of the Frequently Asked Questions.**

### **Why decide to stop amending existing passports?**

Replacing a passport instead of amending it will enhance the overall security of the document. Additionally, with the upcoming Electronic Passport (EP), the printed data must match the data contained on the chip embedded in the Electronic Passport.

### **Can I still get visa pages added to my passport?**

"Yes. You may request additional visa pages for current valid passports using form DS-

4085, Application for Additional Visa Pages.

**I just got my passport in my maiden name, so we could go on our honeymoon, but I plan to take my husband's surname after we get back. Do I have to apply for a new passport with my married name?**

**I have a valid passport, but I just got divorced, and my divorce decree includes the resumption of my maiden name. Do I have to apply for a new passport?**

**We just adopted our foster child, who has a valid passport in his birth surname. The adoption decree changes his surname to ours. Does he need a new passport?**

The answer to all three questions is "yes" because all citizens need to travel in their legal

names. However, which form to use and the cost involved now differ, in part, based on timing.

### **Within the First Year**

If your name changed, and it is still within one year of the date your passport was issued, you may obtain a free replacement passport.

**If you have further questions, please visit  
[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)**

## HEADS UP!

It's tax season again. A tax representative will be at the Embassy to assist US citizens with tax filing....details to follow.

We are hoping to schedule a town hall meeting soon for adult US citizens residing in Nassau. Date and location to be announced via email.

### **NEED TO CONTACT US?**

**E-Mail:**  
[ACSN@state.gov](mailto:ACSN@state.gov)

**On the Web:**  
Embassy: [nassau.usembassy.gov](http://nassau.usembassy.gov)  
Department of State: [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov)

Internal Revenue Service: [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)



Ambassador Rood accepts check for \$2,315 from local students dubbed "Kids 4 Katrina" on October 20. The students participated in a one-day bake sale to raise the funds.

# NEW DEADLINE FOR PASSPORT REQUIREMENTS

## What is the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative?

The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative will require all travelers, including U.S. citizens, to and from the Americas, the Caribbean, and Bermuda to have a passport or other accepted document that establishes the bearer's identity and nationality to enter or re-enter the United States. This is a change from prior travel requirements. The goal is to strengthen border security and facilitate entry into the United States for U.S. citizens and legitimate foreign visitors.

## Who will the Travel Initiative affect?

The travel document initiative will affect all United States citizens traveling within the Western Hemisphere, who will now be required to carry a passport or other accepted document.

It will also affect certain foreign nationals who currently are not required to present a passport to travel to the United States namely most Canadian citizens, citizens of the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda and Mexican citizens.

## When will the Travel Initiative be implemented?

In the proposed implementation plan the Initiative will be rolled out in phases, providing as much advance notice as possible to the affected public to enable them to meet the terms of the new guidelines. The proposed timeline will be as follows:

- **December 31, 2006** – Requirement applied to all air and sea travel to or from Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda.
- **December 31, 2007** – Requirement extended to all land border crossings as well as air and sea travel.


## I thought there was an additional phase to be implemented on December 31, 2005. Is this a change?

In April 2005, the Departments of State (DOS) and Homeland Security (DHS) announced a proposed plan to be implemented in three phases beginning on December 31, 2005 for the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. After further review and considering the delay in publishing the public notice in the Federal Register, DOS and DHS recognized that implementing the December 31, 2005, phase would be problematic for travelers during the upcoming winter tourism season. This change will simplify the implementation and provide a longer lead-time for travelers to come into compliance with the requirements.

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## DECEMBER

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 American Holiday (Embassy Closed)

## JANUARY

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

 Bahamian Holiday (Embassy Closed)

Know an American in The Bahamas or Turks and Caicos not getting the newsletter? Tell them to e-mail us at [ACSN@state.gov](mailto:ACSN@state.gov) with their name and address. We also recommend that all Americans overseas register at [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) in case of emergency.